

WHAT IS CLAIMED:

1. A method of performing a selected alternate dispute resolution procedure online comprising the steps of:

selecting at least one alternate dispute resolution professional;

setting up a main chat room accessible by the alternate dispute resolution professional and first and second disputing parties;

setting up a private chat room accessible by a selected one of the disputing parties and counsel for the selected disputing party for conducting private information exchanges;

activating a virtual presenter accessible in the main chat room for presenting evidence; and

conducting the alternate dispute resolution procedure through the exchange of information through chat in the main chat room and the presentation of evidence using the virtual presenter.

2. The method of Claim 1 wherein said steps of setting-up main and private chat rooms comprise the steps of setting up chat rooms accessible by a global computer network selected from the group comprising the Internet and World Wide Web.

3. The method of Claim 1 wherein the selected alternate dispute resolution procedure is selected from the group comprising arbitration, mediation, summary jury trial and focus group trial.

4. The method of Claim 1 wherein the selected alternate dispute resolution procedure comprises a method of performing a selected alternate dispute resolution procedure online in preparation for a subsequent alternate dispute resolution procedure.
5. The method of Claim 1 wherein said step of selecting at least one alternate dispute professional comprises the step of searching profiles in an electronic database.
6. The method of Claim 1 wherein the virtual presenter is operable to present evidence in a form selected from the group comprising video-deposition testimony, documents, photographs, graphics exhibits, audio statements and computer reconstructions.
7. The method of Claim 1 wherein the virtual presenter is operable to present arguments of lawyers.
8. The method of Claim 1 and further comprising the step of performing a post-procedure analysis.

P005US-19388-AUGUST 2013

9. The method of Claim 8 wherein said step of performing a post-procedure analysis comprises the substeps of:

creating a session record concurrent with said step of conducting the alternate dispute resolution procedure; and

performing content analysis on the session record.

10. The method of Claim 1 and further comprising the step of selecting a focus group for analyzing the alternate dispute resolution procedure.

11. A computer network for implementing alternate dispute resolution procedures comprising:

a plurality of interconnected terminals operable to:

maintain a first chat room for exchanging information between an alternate dispute resolution professional and a plurality of disputing parties;

maintain a second chat room for exchanging confidential information between said professional and a first one of said parties; and

maintain a third room for exchanging confidential information between said professional and a second one of said parties.

12. The computer network of Claim 11 wherein said network is further operable to maintain a virtual caucus room for exchanging information between a selected disputing party and counsel representing said selected party.

13. The computer network of Claim 11 wherein said network implements a presenter operable to present audio and visual presentations to selected ones of the parties and the professional through corresponding ones of said terminals.

14. The computer network of Claim 11 wherein at least one of said terminals communicates with said server via a global computer network selected from the group comprising the Internet and World Wide Web.

15. The computer network of Claim 11 wherein said first chat room simulates an assembly room.

16. The computer network of Claim 11 wherein the professional communicates with said parties through said second and third chat rooms via pop-up screens.

17. The computer network of Claim 11 and further comprising a database for selecting said alternate dispute resolution professional.

18. The computer network of Claim 11 and further comprising a database for selecting a settlement scientist for analyzing a said alternate dispute resolution procedure conducted using said computer network.

19. The computer network of Claim 11 wherein said first chat room simulates a courtroom.

20. The computer network of Claim 19 and further comprising a chat room for jury deliberations.